UNITED
NATIONS

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Economic and Social
Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.4/1994/80
22 December 1993

ENGLISH
Original: FRENCH

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Fiftieth session
Item 20 of the provisional agenda

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF INTOLERANCE AND OF DISCRIMINATION BASED ON RELIGION OR BELIEF

Report of the Secretary-General

1. At its forty-ninth session, the Commission on Human Rights adopted resolution 1993/25, entitled "Implementation of the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief". Paragraphs 10, 11, 14, 16, 20 and 21 read as follows:

"The Commission on Human Rights,

"...

"10. Considers it desirable to enhance the promotional and public information activities of the United Nations in matters relating to freedom of religion or belief and to ensure that appropriate measures are taken to this end in the World Public Information Campaign for Human Rights;

"11. Reiterates, therefore, its invitation to the Secretary-General to continue to give priority to the dissemination of the text of the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief in all the official languages of the United Nations and to take all appropriate measures to make the text available for use by United Nations information centres, as well as by other interested bodies;

"...

"14. Recommends that the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion be given appropriate priority in the work of the United Nations programme of advisory services in the field of human rights, including with regard to the drafting of basic legal texts in conformity with international instruments on human rights and taking into account the provisions of the Declaration;

"...

"16. Welcomes the intention of the Human Rights Committee to make available soon a general comment on article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, dealing with freedom of thought, conscience and religion;

"...

"20. Requests the Secretary-General to provide all necessary assistance to the Special Rapporteur to enable him to report to the Commission at its fiftieth session;

"21. Also requests the Secretary-General to report to the Commission at its fiftieth session on measures taken to implement the present resolution".

2. In response to paragraphs 10 and 11 of the resolution, the Department of Public Information has undertaken the following activities:

(a) The Department of Public Information produced, in April 1993, a special radio documentary entitled "Intolerance and human rights violations", which dealt with problems of racial, religious and ethnic intolerance. The documentary was prepared in the six official languages and adapted to other languages, such as Bangla, Hindi, Indonesian, Kiswahili, Dutch, Portuguese and Turkish. These radio programmes have been broadcast all over the world;

(b) The Department continues to reproduce and distribute copies of the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief (DPI/714). This publication is available in the six official languages of the United Nations. Reprints in some languages are planned for the period 1994-1995;

(c) At many human rights information meetings organized by the Department at United Nations Headquarters and other Offices, including information centres, the various human rights instruments, and particularly the Declaration, are regularly circulated.

3. In response to paragraph 14 of the resolution, the programme of advisory services of the Centre for Human Rights takes due account, in training courses, of the international human rights standards on religious freedom. It also ensures that such standards are incorporated in the National Constitutions of States to which assistance is provided, as well as in human rights legislation, in conformity with the provisions of the Declaration.

4. In connection with the wish expressed in paragraph 16 of the resolution, on 27 September 1993 the Human Rights Committee adopted General comment No. 22 (48), on article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which deals with the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. The text of the General comment is contained in document CCPR/C/21/Rev.1/Add.4.

5. During the period under review, the Special Rapporteur of the Commission on Human Rights on the question of religious intolerance received the support and logistical assistance of the Centre for Human Rights, despite the current financial difficulties, for the proper discharge of his mandate. His report appears in document E/CN.4/1994/79.